

CountyCitizen

Winter 2003

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VIP Program Debuts at MIA

**Technology Behind the Scenes
of the General Elections**

**Library System Opens
Branch in Sunny Isles**

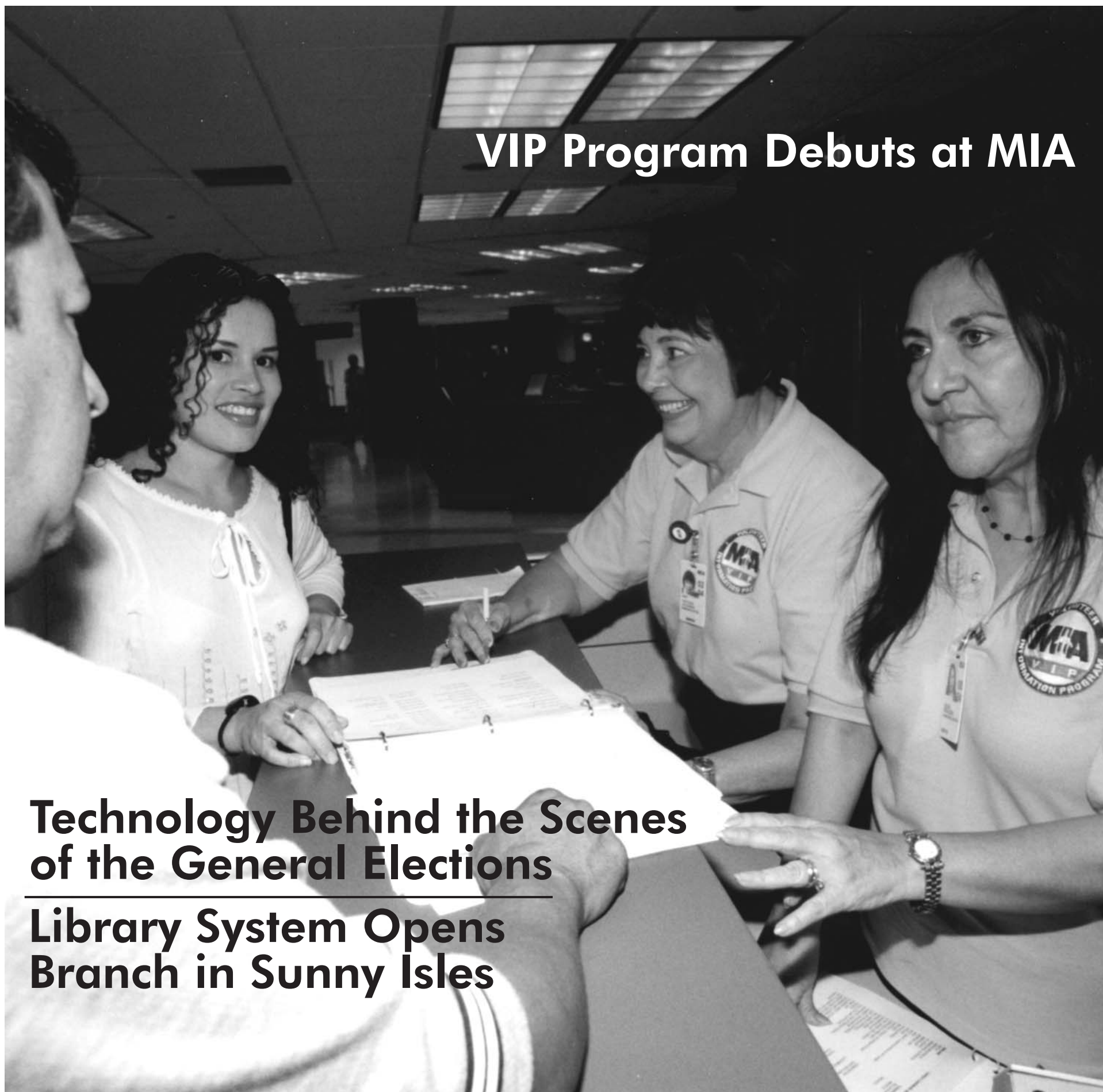


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SPEAKING *Of*

There is a sea of change in Miami-Dade County.

You can feel it in the air. We are bouncing back – economically, socially and operationally. To be sure, our cup is not yet runneth over. But ... it is half full. And, it is filling fast.

A lot of good things are happening in our community. Let's look at some of them.

Election Day

Election Day, November 5, was a great success thanks to thousands of Miami-Dade employees. Members of the Election Department, the Police Department and Fire-Rescue – and just about every other department in the County – all kicked in and worked long hours to make it happen.

Transportation

Another important milestone for our community was the passage of a half-penny tax to fund the People's Transportation Plan. This victory gives us – for the first time – a dedicated funding source for transportation. Hard as it may be to believe, we were the only major metropolitan area in the United States without one.

We are now at the beginning of a \$16 billion, 30-year transportation investment that will double the number of busses on the road, quadruple the size of Metrorail to an amazing 90 miles, and speed up construction of new roads. This will improve our quality of life, attract business, appeal to tourists, and create jobs.

Pre-K

The new Constitutional Amendment to the Florida Constitution, which was passed on Election Day, was a great victory for the children of the State. Beginning 2005, it will provide every four-year-old with the right to a pre-kindergarten education.

Getting here was quite an adventure. Members of my staff and I were on the road for six months. We talked to hundreds of thousands of people – in every major city and town in Florida. Although we needed only 488,000 signatures, we collected more than 700,000. Then we undertook an extensive State-wide Election Campaign. And the children of Florida won.

Free Trade Area of America

A month or so ago, I went to Quito, Ecuador to what was among the most important missions of my Mayoralty. I went there in an effort to convince the other countries of the Western Hemisphere that Miami-Dade is the most qualified site for the permanent location of the Secretariat of the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

This was the first step in bringing the Secretariat here.

When it becomes a reality in 2005, it will create a market of 800 million consumers – with a combined gross domestic product of \$14 trillion. Miami-Dade County will become a major beneficiary of much of this trade. We will, then indeed, be the epicenter of the Americas.

Ethics

It is very gratifying to learn that our effort to instill a sense of ethical responsibility in County employees is paying off. Lt. Mitchell Perlstein, a Miami-Dade firefighter stationed in Aventura, noticed that fire extinguishers that were sent out to an external supplier were coming back not fully recharged or repaired. Looking into it further, he discovered a pattern of irregularities.

Lt. Perlstein reported his finding to a Deputy Inspector General who initiated an investigation. As a result, the Office of the Inspector General found that the supplier had overcharged the County \$128,000. For his diligence, Lt. Perlstein received an award of \$12,800 – 10 percent of the recovered amount. We are all very proud of him, and all the County employees who watch over the people's property.



Alex Penelas
Miami-Dade County Mayor



Connected more than ever with the community

By Steve Shiver, County Manager

It wasn't long ago that scholars discussed a concept called the "Wired City". This technological revolution has come to fruition and has literally transformed the world and redefined our notions of, labor, information, and most importantly, the way Miami-Dade County delivers its services to its residents.

Today more than ever, Miami-Dade residents have a multitude of ways to provide input and receive feedback from their elected officials and county administrators. The technological revolution has opened up the gates for new tools that permit Miami-Dade residents to be in touch instantly with their government officials.

In fact, Miami-Dade residents have one of the most progressive governments in the country in terms of ways we communicate with one another.

From the convenience of one's home or business place, residents can communicate with the county via the Internet at www.miamidade.gov. The county's web portal provides an array of services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Through the county's website residents can: pay their traffic fines online; view their water bills; request a service; check out the cases to be heard in its courts listed by hearing date, court type, and claim; report potholes; renew occupational licenses; or request to have graffiti removed from public property.

To bridge the digital divide, Miami-Dade has augmented the free Internet access available to its residents by adding terminals in neighborhood libraries and at its community learning centers.

Miami-Dade County recently introduced another interesting component of the web portal, its web-based server "My Neighborhood" and "My Home". These inter-active GIS applications join geographical mapping with several databases to provide users with helpful information about their community.

However, the best measure of success for miamidade.gov has been the positive response from the public. This is an indication that our vision for electronic government is becoming a reality. As we continue strengthening the three pillars of government – people, service, and technology – it is clear that technology itself will serve as the foundation.

For those who prefer to communicate in person, Miami-Dade continues to allow its residents to call or visit the Team Metro offices to receive county services. Team Metro has ten centers throughout Miami-Dade. Additionally, through the Team Metro Answer Center 305-468-5900 residents don't even have to leave their homes for the information they need. For locations of Team Metro offices visit: <http://www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/tea>.

Miami-Dade even brings its services directly to the residents via the "Government on the Go Bus". This vehicle travels to different locations providing the services that are presently available at all Team Metro Offices such as: passport acceptance, baby stroller parking permits, transit tokens, passes and parking permits, Bike and Ride permits, dog license tags and Golden Passports; providing information on all county services and programs; and assisting residents with any problems related to code enforcement (in the unincorporated areas) or related to any other county agency.

Other vehicles bringing department services to the residents include Miami-Dade Public Library System's Bookmobile, Miami-Dade Transit's "Ride the Bus", Animal Services "Mobile Animal Care", and the Department of Human Services combined with the State Attorney's Office "Justice in Motion" mobile.

An open and accessible manager's office is vital. Therefore, when you visit my web page at: <http://www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/manager/> you will find a suggestion box allowing you to submit comments directly to me.

If you prefer, you can also reach me at manager@miamidade.gov, 305-375-1032, my office, or 305-246-5409, my home, should you have any questions about our government or suggestions on how we can better serve you.

Don't forget, we're more than county employees, we're neighbors and we're more accessible than ever!



Steve Shiver
County Manager



New Homeland Security Division created to intensify security and response efforts

By Aimee Artilles, Communications Department

County Manager Steve Shiver recently created the Homeland Security Division, pursuant to the Board of County Commissioners mandate to develop better local coordination of anti-terrorism efforts. Samuel Williams, the Assistant County Manager for Homeland Security and Public Safety, will be responsible for managing this division. Kimberly Redmon, Assistant to the County Manager for Public Safety will assume more direct responsibility for the existing public safety departments, which include police, fire, corrections and the Medical Examiners Office.



Samuel William, Director Homeland Security Division

The new Homeland Security Division will work in partnership with the Office of Emergency Management, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade Police and other key personnel from the Seaport, Airport, Transit, Water and Sewer, and the Information Technology Department to accomplish the following six objectives:

- Train and equip the County's first responders
- Protect the County's critical infrastructure, i.e. buildings, information technology, computer networks and the Internet
- Obtain and manage state and federal terrorism grant funding
- Improve information sharing
- Improve intelligence gathering
- Improve coordination and effectiveness of proposed federal community-based initiatives

The Division will consolidate and coordinate current terrorism-related resources currently utilized in Miami-Dade County and will have six full-time positions and six detached personnel from Fire Rescue and the Police Department.

"Recent events have shown us that we are still vulnerable and should intensify our security and response efforts," stated Steve Shiver, County Manager. "This Division will allow us to better coordinate anti-terrorism efforts on a state and federal level and communicate more effectively on a local level. We will do everything possible to ensure Miami-Dade residents are safe and protected."

VIP Program debuts at MIA

By Cynthia Paul, Miami-Dade Aviation



Volunteer information representatives assist Miami International Airport passengers.

The Miami-Dade Aviation Department's (MDAD) Volunteer Information Program (VIP) officially debuted on October 18, 2002. Falling under MDAD's new Customer Service Division, the program's main mission is to provide extensive and courteous services to the public traveling through Miami International Airport. The ultimate goal for the airport will be to achieve leadership in the Customer Service arena among the world's major airports.

Present at the kick-off were: MDAD Assistant Director for Business Development Miguel Southwell; MDAD Manager of Customer Service Irving Fourcand; Miami Beach Director of Tourism and Protocol Michael Aller; and Beba Sosa, Director of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

"The Volunteer Information Program is a great example of one of the many ways in which we are improving county services," said Miami-Dade County Manager Steve Shiver.

After undergoing a two-day training program, participants work at the airport terminal building's information counters or roam throughout the facilities. Responsibilities include answering passenger queries, informing them of area attractions and restaurants, and directing them to airline counters, baggage locations, restrooms, or other needed services.

Alice L. Roe, a retiree from American Express living in Kendall, explained that she volunteers "because I've traveled somewhat and it was always helpful to find someone who could direct me in an unfamiliar airport. This saves a lot of time, especially when you are in a hurry. The bottom line, though, is that I feel satisfaction in being able to assist people."

Roe heard about the program from her daughter Alyce Kielman, head of KAT Marketing. Kielman also participates in the VIP at the airport. Kielman explained, "I've traveled extensively and experienced first hand how frustrating it is when there is no one to help or provide information or running into someone that's rude and doesn't care. That's a problem in many airports including this one. Tourism is one of our major industries and the first impression travelers have is not necessarily the best. There's a lack of staff to assist them. The airport needs knowledgeable information/customer service people that care. My background is in the hospitality industry and even though I'm not directly involved it is still a very important part of my business. This is something that affects everybody in this community."

William Talbert, III, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau agreed, "The full staffing of information counters and the ability to assist passengers throughout MIA will help us improve customer service and promote the airport and Miami as a world-class facility and destination," he said.

Some of the volunteers will provide assistance to the VIP Secret Shopper program. "This is a quality control program that will require the discreet monitoring of service provided to the traveling public by concessionaires, airlines, and other service providers," said Aviation Director Angela Gittens.

Fourcand enthused, "This is one of the best initiatives undertaken by this administration. I was very surprised by the response from the community who gladly volunteered in overwhelming numbers their time and effort for the success of this new endeavor. I was also surprised by how quickly the traveling public has embraced the idea. The positive response expressed by the public proves that it is extremely beneficial to the community. Indeed, good customer service reflects positively on the entire destination."

Miami-Dade Police seeks volunteers

By Heriberto Aponte, Miami-Dade Police

The Miami-Dade Police Department invites individuals to volunteer for a variety of interesting assignments throughout the department. As a volunteer, you will have a chance to participate in interesting events, develop new skills, while providing a valuable service to your community. To qualify as a volunteer, participants must be a resident of Miami-Dade County, be at least 18 years of age and pass a background check. A few examples of how volunteers help the police department include working the bilingual telephone banks in the Missing Persons Unit of the Domestic Crime Bureau, entering data at the district stations and Central Records Bureau. Other volunteers assist with secretarial and clerical jobs. Please call 305-471-2360 for additional information or visit: www.miamidade.gov.



Volunteer enters data at the Central Records Bureau.

MIA Capital Improvement Program enters peak construction phase

By Sari Koshetz, Dade Aviation Consultants

With a total of \$2.5 billion under construction and another \$1.3 billion in the design, bid and award phases, Miami International Airport (MIA) is moving into the most active construction period in the history of its Capital Improvement Program.

More than 35 trade packages valued at \$481 million were advertised between March and October in one of the nation's most ambitious construction programs ever undertaken within an operating airport.

The recent trade packages include steel, foundations, curtain walls, baggage handling, aprons, taxi lanes and facility modification trade packages, all part of the massive new South Terminal Program. This \$510 million component of the construction program will add one million square feet of terminal and concourse area, including 50,000 square feet of concession space.

The North Terminal Development (NTD) is well underway in construction, with more than \$916 million in contract commitments (\$422 million of which is already in place) and nearly \$400 million to be advertised and awarded by the end of 2003. The \$1.5 billion NTD program is expected to reach its first peak of construction spending of \$20 million per month by mid-2003.

Other major projects in construction include the 8,600-foot New North Runway, which will increase airfield capacity by 25 percent; the Central Chiller Plant Expansion, to accommodate more than doubling the size of the facilities; the Midfield Air Rescue and Fire Fighting Facility; the Central Collection Plaza, to modernize and ease the flow in the parking garages; 15 Security Rooms with associated cable and equipment projects; and numerous utilities and drainage packages.



Construction of a fourth runway will be completed in mid 2003. The 8,600-foot runway will increase airfield capacity by 22 percent.

After September 11, airports faced unprecedented challenges of new security demands, passenger needs, economic vitality and capital development issues. Angela Gittens, who took the helm of MIA in March 2001, worked with staff to revise MIA's Capital Improvement Program, analyzing its scope, cost and schedule. The Director's goal was to match the timing of facility development with the projected demand for facilities and what customers and business partners are willing and able to pay for. The Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners approved the revalidated CIP in March 2002, with the new Phase I affordability limit set at \$4.8 billion. That figure is down from \$5.4 billion, but future Phase II components of the Program will bring the total to an estimated \$7.4 billion beyond 2015.

Since the redevelopment of MIA began more than 10 years ago, more than 123 projects worth more than \$1 billion have been completed. MIA now has one million square feet of expanded and/or refurbished terminal space, including a new Concourse A and a rebuilt Concourse H; 12 new cargo buildings, adding more than one million square feet of cargo warehouse space; a new 1,500-space parking garage; and more wide body and international gates. For more information please visit: www.miami-airport.com.

Fire Department begins motorcycle emergency response

Special Miami-Dade Fire Rescue unit will be the largest in the Southeast U.S.

By Greg Chin, Communications

The Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners recently passed a resolution, sponsored by Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, creating a pilot program that forms a Motorcycle Emergency Response Team (MERT) unit within the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department. Upon completion of a feasibility study, the department will determine the future application of the program.

The unit will be outfitted with 10 motorcycles donated by BMW of North America that are equipped with standard life safety equipment found on fire-rescue vehicles such as defibrillators (for heart attack patients), oxygen and first aid supplies. MERT units have already proven to be successful in highly congested areas of Europe where traffic slows down the response time of conventional rescue vehicles. The passage of this



resolution makes Miami-Dade County's unit the largest of its kind in the southeastern United States to provide this cutting-edge service and one of the few such programs in the country.

"The congested roadways in Miami-Dade County pose many challenges, one of the largest being our Fire Rescue units getting to traffic accident scenes more quickly," said Commissioner Sosa. "The MERT unit would be a huge step in overcoming that problem and could save a countless number of lives."

The width of the smallest Fire Rescue response vehicle currently utilized in Miami-Dade is approximately 10 feet (120 inches). The proposed motorcycle response units span a width of only 37.2 inches, largely increasing its ability to navigate through traffic. In addition to increased response time, the MERT motorcycles would be able to expeditiously assess the victim's condition and determine the need for other units to respond as necessary.

"Part of my vision for the Fire Rescue Department is to greatly lower our response times," said Charles Phillips, Director of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue. "This type of 'out-of-the-box' thinking is what we're known for, and I believe this program will increase the survivability of many residents who traverse our roadways."

Technology: In the spotlight and behind the scenes of the November 5th election

By Judy Zito, e-Government Director

All eyes were on Miami-Dade County's new touch screen voting machines that performed up to par on November 5th. Not so well known is the technology that was in play behind the scenes in the weeks leading up to Election Day.

The scheduling of people proved to be a major challenge for Jane Feuer, Assistant Director of the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD), and the person assigned to handle staffing allocation and payroll for the November 5th election. With just over a month to prepare, she was tasked to assign thousands of county employees and poll workers to over 500 polling locations, taking into account many factors including training, availability, skills and expertise.

Over a long weekend, a team of eGovernment experts was assembled to help her out. A plan was drawn to extract employee information from the payroll files, merge this information with pollworker information kept in elections, and create an assignment database that could be used to track assignments and payroll for employees and pollworkers. The 'Election Resource Assignment' database used the power of the web to provide employees with up to the minute Election Day assignments including their role, the precinct location and the names of other personnel assigned to that precinct. Departmental management was able to submit staff excusal requests, and review and monitor departmental staffing assignments as they were made. Feuer and her elections staffing team were able to assign precinct staff and monitor staffing overages and shortages as changes were made. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology was used to match employee addresses with polling locations and place them as close to their homes as possible. Elections timesheets, data entry and reports were incorporated into the database to ensure that payroll records for pollworkers and County employees would reflect the correct hours worked for the elections. Within days, the system was designed and operational, and during the course of the elections planning process, the system received over one million hits!

Added to this was an informational website that was designed to inform county employees of important information related to the elections process. Many questions were posed regarding Election Day preparations, parking, food, compensation, etc., and the information was updated many times a day. Without the website, there was no way to ensure that a consistent message reached everyone.

On Election Day, attention shifted to the 'map', a third component of technology dubbed the 'In Command' system. Again using GIS technology, In Command was developed to track polling places and precincts through various statuses during the Election. As each polling location was successfully opened at 7am, a computerized map of county precincts turned from white to green. This reporting of status in real time across more than 750 precincts was no small feat. Arrangements were made with Nextel to provide the Quality Assurance (QA) managers with instant two-way messaging telephones to automatically update precinct statuses. Just before 7am, a text message was sent out to all QA managers, asking them to press a button on their phone when they had successfully opened their location. This action triggered

a message, delivered over the Nextel wireless network, received by the county's email system and automatically posted to the GIS which controlled the coloring of map. Had any problems been encountered, the polling location would have reported a status that would reflect a yellow or red shading; but by 7:30am, the map was green, showing that all precincts were open. The same type of process occurred at 7pm to handle the closing of polls.

Another essential element in success was teaching voters how to use the iVotronics voting machines. An animated tutorial to do just that was used extensively by community outreach staff at MDPD and Elections. Using Flash technology, the voter was guided through a virtual tour of an iVotronics machine, and then invited to select "a hand of their choice" to try out the touch screen voting! <http://www.miamidade.gov/info/community/elections.htm>

"Miami Dade County is extraordinarily fortunate to have such dedicated and talented technology experts," remarked Feuer as she reflected on the accomplishments achieved under such short time constraints and intense national scrutiny. "There is no doubt that technology played a critical role in the success of these elections."



County Manager Steve Shiver visits polling site in Liberty City.

NEWS *and Notes*



Buckle Up Florida

Did you know that it is against the law in Florida to drive without a safety belt? If you or your kids ride unbuckled, you risk getting a hefty ticket, or worse, injury or death in a crash. Drive safely and buckle up your whole family. They will be *thankful* you did. Buckle Up Florida, it's the law. For more information, visit www.buckleupflorida

Cornucopia of the Arts Festival showcases more than 1,000 young performers and exhibitors

By Laura Phillips, Miami-Dade Parks and Recreation

The 22nd Annual Cornucopia of the Arts Festival was recently held at the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens. The only event of its kind in Florida, this award-winning, youth-oriented festival, featured more than 1,000 young artists from the tri-county area in a dazzling mix of multi-cultural entertainment.

Visitors enjoyed a stellar line-up of entertainment, including the Chilean Foundation of Children and Youth Orchestra, co-presented by the distinguished patronage of the First Lady of Chile; The Thomas Armour Youth Ballet, with excerpts from "The Nutcracker"; and the Gold Coast Theatre Co. in an interactive rendition of "Peter and the Wolf." Also spotlighted, were visual artists and ensembles like the Florida Youth Orchestra of Broward County, The Barnyard in Coconut Grove, North Beach Elementary, Miami Jackson Senior High School as well as several other local schools.



Themed "Enchanted by Nature," the festivities took place in the magnificent Baroque gardens of Vizcaya, amidst a backdrop of artistic displays that integrate art and nature.



Young ballet dancers delight the public with their graceful dance movements.



Customer Satisfaction Survey has been delayed

Miami-Dade County still wants to hear from you!

The comprehensive resident satisfaction survey has been delayed until the new year. We will be calling 3,000 residents to assess their level of satisfaction with our services and to identify issues that affect the quality of life in our community. If you receive a call asking you to participate in the survey – please take a few minutes to help us out and let your voice be heard. For more information, feel free to contact Carlos Maxwell at the Office of Performance Improvement, 305-349-6156.

Miami-Dade participates in Domestic Violence March

By Rachel Tourgeman, Department of Human Services



Miami-Dade County Manager, Steve Shiver with domestic violence community activists dressed in wedding gowns.

The Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services (DHS) Safespace Foundation and a host of other collaborating entities orchestrated a March against domestic violence. This initiative took place on October 30 at Bayfront Park in memory of Ms. Gladys Ricart who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend on the day of her wedding and for all the other victims who were not able to escape death.

Addressing a group of women dressed in wedding gowns, Miami-Dade County Manager Steve Shiver, an ardent supporter in

the eradication of domestic violence, delivered a passionate speech imploring the public to join him and other key organizations to help put an end to domestic violence throughout our multicultural communities. The County Manager was joined by Dean Taylor, Senior Executive Director of DHS; Manny Diaz, City of Miami Mayor; Natacha Seijas, Miami-Dade County Commissioner; Katherine Fernandez Rundle, State Attorney; Jorge Luis Lopez, President, Jorge Luis Lopez Foundation; Barbara Howard, of Howard & Associates; Raul Martinez, Chief of Police-City of Miami; and Patricia Sims, Acting Director of Safespace and other dignitaries.

During the event, the County Manager emphasized the fact that domestic violence is a global, public-health issue. "It is extremely important for society to acknowledge that no one has the right to abuse others either physically, emotionally, sexually, financially or psychologically," remarked Steve Shiver, Miami-Dade County Manager.

Domestic violence is the most frequent cause of injury to women who are treated in emergency rooms and more common than motor vehicle accidents and robberies combined. Ninety-five percent of the domestic violence incidents are reported to be from men to women and five percent from women to men. It is estimated that treatment for victims costs between \$3 billion and \$5 billion a year.



Rachel Tourgeman, Community Relations Director for the Department of Human Services' Advocates for Victims is thrilled to join the Harley Davidson motorcycle group who traveled 166 miles collecting approximately \$2000 for the Safespace Foundation. Nancy Natale, and Mayrann Constanza, Director of a Harley Davidson motorcycle group conducted the charity effort.

Under the leadership of Miami-Dade County Commissioners, Mayor Alex Penelas, County Manager Steve Shiver and Dean Taylor, Sr., there is an entity within DHS entitled: *Advocate for Victims Programs*, that serves as a safe haven for victims of domestic violence and their children. Safespace Shelter, the name of the center, provides the following intervention for those in need:

- Safe Shelter
- Crisis Counseling
- Information & Referral
- Emergency Food & Clothing
- Advocacy & Support
- Individual & Group Counseling
- Transportation
- Financial Assistance
- Child Care
- Child Enrichment Programs

If you know of anyone that is a victim of domestic violence who feels that their life is in imminent danger, please advise them to call 305-758-2546. Help is within their reach. Your involvement can save a life!

Former Transit Director appointed to head Office of Public Transportation Management

By Michael De Cossio, Miami-Dade Transit



Danny Alvarez, Director Office of Public Transportation Management

Danny Alvarez, Executive Director of the newly created Office of Public Transportation Management (OPTM), has served as a Miami-Dade County administrator for almost twenty-five years and most recently as Director of Miami-Dade Transit (MDT). Under his leadership, MDT successfully spearheaded an innovative transit-oriented joint development program with the private sector. His efforts resulted in significant investment along the transit corridor, creating jobs, affordable housing, and redeveloping neighborhood communities.

During his tenure as transit director, Mr. Alvarez replaced an aging bus fleet, and today, MDT enjoys the youngest bus fleet in the nation. He also secured funding for various service expansion projects, such as Phase II of the South Miami-Dade Busway, which provides a direct link between Metrorail and Homestead/Florida City, and construction of the newest Metrorail station – the Palmetto Station – located west of SR 826 at the NW 74 Street exit.

Mr. Alvarez played a very significant role in obtaining public support for a dedicated source of funding for future transportation projects, ushering in an era of significant transportation improvements that will bring increased mobility and provide prosperity to our community. As executive director of the OPTM, Mr. Alvarez will be ultimately responsible for implementing the People's Transportation Plan. The PTP includes construction of up to 88.9-miles of countywide rapid transit lines and nearly doubling the existing bus fleet, adding 635 new buses.

A recipient of numerous awards, Mr. Alvarez serves on the American Public Transportation Association and the Florida Public Transportation Association boards and was chairman of the Florida International University Institute of Government Steering Committee.

Miami-Dade Finance Department receives budget award

Miami-Dade County has received the distinguished Budget Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the fiscal year 2002-2003. This certificate of recognition for budget preparation, which is the highest award in governmental budgeting, exemplifies Miami-Dade County's ability to adhere to program standards.

GOOD *Service*

Voters approve the People's Transportation Plan

Public transit improvements begin weekend after elections

On November 5, Miami-Dade voters overwhelmingly voted in favor of the People's Transportation Plan. Public transit improvements began immediately on November 9, the weekend after elections.

What is the People's Transportation Plan?

Miami-Dade has consistently ranked high on a list of the most congested areas in the nation. In 2002, Miami-Dade officials held nearly 100 community meetings and two major transportation summits to hear the public's concerns and to develop a plan that would generate the funds to finally put a world-class transportation system in place. From the first meeting, Miami-Dade residents understood the need for local funding to finance this plan. Their recommendation: a half percent sales surtax to fund major transportation improvements. During the public gatherings, residents spoke out in unison expressing their desire for the creation of a 15-member "Citizen's Independent Transportation Trust" (CITT), a watchdog group empowered to monitor, oversee, review, audit and investigate implementation of the transportation and transit projects funded.

Grassroots, civic, religious organizations, business association, judges, and others may nominate members for each of the seats on the CITT. Commissioners then make their own selection from these nominees and appoint one member to represent every county Commission District. Miami-Dade Mayor selects another and the Dade League of Cities picks the 15th appointment. The CITT will be in place and sworn into office at the start of 2003.



Metromover is a free automated people-mover system that serves downtown Miami from Omni to Brickell and connects with Metrorail at the Government Center and Brickell stations.

The work begins

One day after the General Election, Metromover began to operate free of charge for everyone. People over the age of 65 can now ride Metrobus, Metrorail and Metromover at no cost regardless of income.

By the end of November, Metrobus expects to add 822,000 additional yearly miles to some existing Metrobus routes, including weekend and midday service, increase the frequency of bus service, and add new Little Haiti Circulator. Other parts of the plan call for nearly 89 additional miles of rapid transit (Metrorail), 24-hour Metrorail service by June of 2003, new bus routes, extension of bus service to 24 hours on some routes, and an additional 635 new buses to improve service. More than 3,000 new transit jobs will be created and thousands more in construction and service related fields.

Creation of the Office of Public Transportation Management

To begin the implementation of the People's Transportation Plan, the Office of Public Transportation Management (OPTM) was created. To spearhead OPTM's efforts, Danny Alvarez has been appointed as Executive Director. As former director of the Miami-Dade Transit Agency, Alvarez played a critical role in the outreach plan and grassroots campaign for the PTP.

The Office of Public Transportation Management has been formed to prepare for the immediate implementation of the People's Transportation Plan that is intended to expand access to public transportation for county residents and visitors.

Resources will be focused on implementing the following provisions as outlined in the PTP:

- Creation of the Citizen's Independent Transportation Trust
- Bus service improvements
- Expansion of the County's Rapid Transit System by an additional 88.9 miles
- Major Highway and road improvements
- Neighborhood improvements
- Implementation of the municipal transportation component

The OPTM will provide necessary support to the Citizen's Independent Transportation Trust and its nominating committee, if the bodies so choose. Additionally the OPTM will ensure that all actions are implemented in a timely manner and that all initiatives are carefully reviewed, prioritized and executed. This new office will also act as liaison with our municipal partners as they too implement their portion of the PTP.

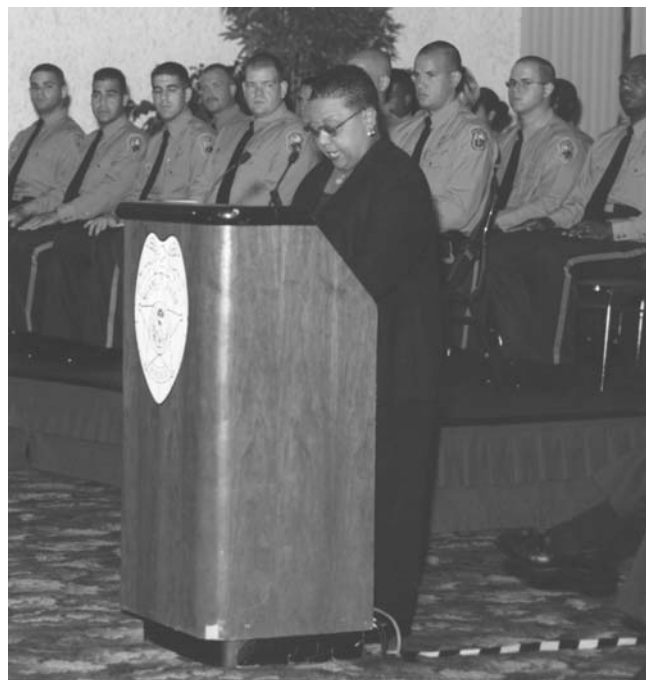
For more information about the People's Transportation Plan, please call 305-884-7567 or visit www.trafficrelief.com.

DIRECT

from the District

District 1

Commissioner Betty T. Ferguson congratulates police academy graduates



Commissioner Betty T. Ferguson addresses police academy graduates.

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Betty T. Ferguson recently addressed members of the Metropolitan Police Institute Basic Law Enforcement Class Number 82 during their Graduation Ceremony. Commissioner Ferguson reminded the 31 graduates, who will work for the Miami-Dade County Police Department, of the importance of their chosen profession. She encouraged them to make lasting relationships with the communities they will serve. Additionally, she reiterated that effective leadership starts at the "top." "Miami-Dade County Police Director Carlos Alvarez is a great example for the new officers to live by,"

said Commissioner Ferguson. Officers Erik Schottenheimer, Johnnie Harrison and Elisa Torres served as training advisors and Stacy Devero was the class leader.

District 2

Commissioner Dorrin Rolle's Economic Development plan will create jobs in the Inner City



Commissioner Dorrin Rolle

The Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners recently adopted a resolution that makes it possible for African American trucking firms to haul away sludge from 11 major canals that must be cleaned and dredged. Cleaning and dredging contracts awarded under this resolution will have the contractual obligation to allow minority firms (Black-owned) to be mentored under the County's hauling contracts.

Under Commissioner Rolle's leadership and support, the Commission voted to provide opportunities for all qualified community contractors to participate on County contracts to the maximum extent possible. They also found it in the best interest of the County to waive formal

bid procedures and the provisions of Administrative Order 3-2 in connection with this project, authorizing the County Manager to award additional contracts to ensure full participation by community contractors.

Commissioner Rolle envisions this mentoring program enabling black truckers the opportunity of purchasing and owning their own trucks. The trucking firm will hire drivers directly from the community. This way, the inner city community will feel the economic stimulus. Philip Johns and Dante Starks from the Commissioner's office will closely monitor the level of participation in this program.

Firms that have already qualified for the County Canal Dredging and Hauling Mentoring Program by having five trucks with adequate bonding and insurances are: Leno Transportation; Impact Construction, Inc.; Lonezie Jones Trucking; "N" Touch Logistic Services, Inc.; and Underground Specialists, Inc.

District 3

Commissioner Dr. Barbara M. Carey-Shuler installed as chairperson; holds public hearing for victims of predatory lenders

Long-time Commissioner Dr. Barbara M. Carey-Shuler was chosen as Chairperson of the Board by her fellow commissioners on Tuesday, October 22, 2002. As Chairperson, Commissioner Carey-Shuler will serve a two-year term and is joined in her new role by Vice Chairperson Katy Sorenson, District 8, who was also elected on October 22. The Board of County Commissioners gained power to select its chairperson after Miami-Dade County voters approved an amendment to the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter on September 10, 2002.

A public servant since 1979, Chairperson Carey-Shuler has made major contributions as a county commissioner. She introduced and led the effort to pass the set-aside law and the affirmative action policy to a final decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. The legislation has produced more jobs, generated more tax revenues and created more business opportunities for minorities and women, specifically African-Americans, than any other economic development measure proposed and passed by Miami-Dade County government. In September 2002, she was instrumental in sponsoring legislation to select an interim chairperson until the permanent post was elected. Chairperson Carey-Shuler is the first African-American woman elected to chair the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners.

Prior to being named Chairperson, Commissioner Carey-Shuler, Florida State Representative Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall (D-Miami), U.S. Congressman Kendrick Meek and members of the Anti-Predatory Lending Workgroup held a public hearing in October to hear testimonies from victims of predatory lenders. The hearing was a result of several Miami-Dade elderly residents losing their homes to predatory lenders through foreclosure.

"Predatory lending is a national epidemic," said Commissioner Carey-Shuler. "Far too many people have lost their homes and their life's savings to unscrupulous lenders. We are working to stop this practice."

To holistically address this problem and bring some relief to the victims, Commissioner Carey-Shuler created the Anti-Predatory Lending Workgroup of Miami-Dade County. The Workgroup is in the process of developing an education and legal redress initiative.



Commissioner Carey-Shuler was officially sworn in as Board of County Commissioners Chairperson on Thursday, November 7, 2002. Pictured from left: County Court Judge Wendell M. Graham; Chairperson Carey-Shuler; and her husband, Lamar Shuler.

"The American dream of home ownership is the aspiration of many Americans," said Commissioner Carey-Shuler. "For many low-income families, it is the ultimate realization of a life-long quest, and to lose their prized possession in the sunset of their years can be catastrophic."

During the public hearing, the Miami-Dade Housing Agency and Fannie Mae (FNM/NYSE), the nation's largest source of financing for home mortgages, announced a \$5-million, anti-predatory, refinancing initiative designed to relieve borrowers who may have been victims of abusive mortgage lending practices.

District 4

Commissioner Sally Heyman participates in groundbreaking ceremony



(L-R) Commissioner Sally Heyman, former Senator Ron Silver, Senator Gwen Margolis, Sunny Isles Beach Vice Mayor Danny Iglesias, Mayor Dave Samson, Commissioner Norm Edelcup and Commissioner Gerry Goodman

County Commissioner Sally Heyman, recently joined members of the Sunny Isles Beach City Commission, state Senator Gwen Margolis, former state Senator Ron Silver and area officials in the groundbreaking ceremony held in honor of the Sunny Isles Beach City Hall complex.

The new city hall will house all operating departments of the city, including the police department. The building will also accommodate a branch of the Miami-Dade

County Library and provide office space for visiting elected officials.

District 5

Commissioner Bruno A. Barreiro thanks all Miami-Dade County voters for their Transportation Plan support

Miami-Dade County voters overwhelmingly approved the Transportation initiative on the November 5, 2002 general election ballot. The plan includes building rapid transit lines to West Dade, Kendall, Florida City, Miami Beach and North Dade; expanding bus service; adding 635 buses; improving traffic signalization to reduce traffic backups; improving major and neighborhood roads and highways, including drainage; and funding to municipalities for road and transportation projects provided by levying a ½ percent sales surtax (beginning January 1, 2003). The surtax proceeds will be overseen by the Citizen's Independent Transportation Trust.

Several improvements have already been implemented, including free Metrobus and Metrorail rides for all individuals 65 years of age and older and free Metromover service for all riders. New Metrobus circulators will be added to the Little Haiti and Coconut Grove area and several Metrobus routes (6, 22, 27, 35, 40, 56, 87, 95 Express, Flagler MAX and J) will be expanded.



From left: Hilda Fernandez, Executive Director, Office of Homeless Trust; Danny Alvarez, Director, Office of Public Transportation Management; County Commissioner Bruno A. Barreiro; and Bradley Roosevelt, Director of Miami-Dade Transit.

District 6

Commissioner Sosa continues to be actively involved and focused on improving the quality of life of District 6 residents

Her steadfast efforts have been directed to improving flooding control in her district, which is one of the most severely affected areas of the county each year during the rainy season.

On October 4, Commissioner Sosa participated in the groundbreaking ceremony of the C-4 Basin Impoundment Area which would keep canals at appropriate flood prevention levels by maintaining water in less populated, western sections of the county.

On October 10, the Commissioner participated in a panel discussion at the 27th Annual Conference on Water Management. The topics discussed included the water conservation efforts, the history of flood protection in South Florida, and interaction with the water management districts. Other participants in the panel were then County Commissioner-elect Jose "Pepe" Diaz; Clerk of the County Courts Harvey Ruvin; Colonel Greg May, Commander of the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Henry Dean, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District.

Commissioner Sosa has complemented her community efforts by sponsoring two resolutions that will aid the county's flood and water damage prevention efforts. One resolution "urged the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to perform field monitoring before implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) to assure the protection of Urban and Agricultural Users, Flood Protection, and the Natural environment." The other resolution established "an inter-agency task force of County professionals chaired by a representative of the County Manager's office to track CERP activities."

Commissioner Rebeca Sosa is committed to making Miami-Dade County a better, safer and cleaner place to live for residents, and she maintains her "open door" policy; access and accountability are the cornerstones of this policy and any citizen may contact the Commissioner at 305-267-6377 to share their ideas and concerns.



From left, County Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz; Henry Dean, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District; Harvey Ruvin, Clerk of the County Courts; Commissioner Rebecca Sosa; Col. Greg May, Commander of the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

District 7

Commissioner Jimmy L. Morales serves as 'temporary chair'; receives honor from health department

On Tuesday, October 8, 2002, a resolution passed by the Board of County Commissioners allowed the Board to appoint two-term Commissioner Jimmy L. Morales as "temporary chairman." Commissioner Morales served as chairman of the board on October 15 during the installation ceremony for newly elected and re-elected county commissioners. He also presided over the October 8 regular commission meeting and a public hearing of the Elections Oversight Task Force. The appointment of temporary chair was a fairly easy process with Commissioner Morales volunteering

himself for the role. The duties of the temporary chair were simple: fulfill the responsibilities for two weeks with the understanding that he could not be a candidate for the permanent position. Commissioner Morales considered it a rewarding experience and believes he was able to serve in a variety of ways.

"Serving as temporary chair offered me the opportunity to continue serving my district and address very serious concerns called before the Board, such as the 2002 election," said Commissioner Morales.

Commissioner Morales was honored recently by the Miami-Dade County Health Department for his support in the lead poisoning prevention effort throughout the county. The commissioner was recognized at a Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program event held at the Stephen P. Clark Government Center in October 2002.

"It was truly an honor to be recognized by the Health Department," said Commissioner Morales. "I was pleased to present the resolution that expands the Emergency Relocation Program to include low-income families who live in private or subsidized housing that have been contaminated by lead poisoning."

The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program reports there have been approximately 500 cases of lead poisoning reported to the Miami-Dade County Health Department.



At the 2002 Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Commissioner Morales (far left) was honored for his prevention efforts in Miami-Dade.

DIRECT

from the District

District 8

Commissioner Katy Sorenson installed as Vice Chair; leads efforts to develop southern Miami-Dade well



Commissioner Katy Sorenson

Shortly after her re-election to a third consecutive term in September 2002, the Board of County Commissioners selected Commissioner Katy Sorenson as its Vice-Chair. She was officially sworn in to that office during a special ceremony in November.

Hitting the ground running, the new Vice Chair immediately took decisive steps to deal with southern Miami-Dade's most demanding issues: ensuring that the construction boom about to transform the area with dozens of new neighborhoods provides the best possible quality of life.

Explosive growth will be a fact of life in south Miami-Dade for years to come, especially in the area south of Cutler Ridge and north of Homestead Air Reserve Base. "We are going to grow – the challenge is to make sure we have learned from all the mistakes we made in the past," said Vice Chair Sorenson. "I am bound and determined we are going to do it right this time."

On Monday, December 9, the Commissioner convened a special workshop for Community Council #15, County and School Board staffers, the major landowners in the area and their representatives. The unprecedented session focused on meeting the public

infrastructure needs created by new development up front, instead of trying to catch up on school, parks and other facilities post-construction, as has been the case in many other areas of this community. After a frank exchange of views, the developers, County staff and School Board officials agreed to continue their common efforts to create quality communities where only farmland sits today.

Vice Chair Katy Sorenson was also instrumental in the creation of the South Miami-Dade Development Agency, designed to address the economic development potential of the former Homestead Air Force Base, and other parts of southern Miami-Dade ravaged by Hurricane Andrew 10 years ago.

"In the last ten years, southern Miami-Dade has been on the road to recovery," said Vice Chairperson Sorenson. "This is the next big step. We expect this agency to be the catalyst for economic growth." The Agency will serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of County Commissioners and it will be staffed with an executive director, support staff and a broad membership of organizations reflecting the diversity of Miami-Dade County.

Commissioner Sorenson also sponsored the ordinance creating the Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). That group will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of redevelopment plans for this particularly hard-hit area.

Its first project will be the redevelopment of Naranja Lakes, once a condominium complex of approximately 200 acres, which was devastated by Hurricane Andrew. The development will be re-constructed as a traditional neighborhood, creating a mixed-use middle-income neighborhood. Developer George de Guardiola will spearhead the project, which is set to begin in early 2003.

The next four years will provide defining moments for the future of the entire southern third of the County, and you can expect that Vice Chair Sorenson will fighting for the public's interests every step of the way.

District 9

Commissioner Dennis C. Moss leads elections task force; sponsors ordinance for aviation committee

In the weeks following the September 10, 2002 elections, Commissioner Dennis C. Moss spearheaded the Elections Oversight Task Force in an effort to publicly investigate the problems that plagued the September primary and to plan for the November 5th General Election. The Task Force, chaired by Commissioner Moss, listened to hours of testimony from community activists, poll workers, the general public and elected officials.

On Wednesday, October 16, 2002, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Dennis C. Moss, District 9, helped Goulds residents and business owners celebrate the opening of the Goulds Shopping Plaza and Kids at Play Learning Center, 22165 SW 112 Avenue, Miami.

Satisfied that Miami-Dade County's General Election was fair, Commissioner Moss said, it was an effort achieved through communication and preparation.

"Forming the task force was a small but very significant part of the county's election plan," said Commissioner Moss. "There were many variables to creating a trouble-free election, and creating the task force was a way of bringing those issues to the surface. The community needs to know why their right to vote was challenged and what will be done to correct it."

In October, Commissioner Moss proposed an ordinance to establish an Aviation Committee, which would address concerns pertaining to Miami International Airport, the County's four general aviation airports (Opa-Locka, Opa-Locka West, Kendall-Tamiami Executive and Homestead General), as well as the training and transition airports in Miami-Dade and Collier Counties. "The airport has been the poster child for everything that is allegedly wrong with county government," said Commissioner Moss. "As a result, we've had groups that have approached the county commission requesting the creation of an airport authority."



Joining Commissioner Dennis C. Moss (center) at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Goulds Shopping Plaza and Kids at Play Learning Center were, from left: Stephanie Bivins, Goulds CDC Staff; Lewis Canty, Goulds CDC Board Member; the Reverend Ernest Morrow, Goulds CDC Board Member; Tony Fernandez, architect for Kids at Play Learning Center; Norman Nierenberg, Director of Kids at Play Learning Center; J.L. Demps, Jr., Board President of Goulds CDC; Minister Johnny Futch, Goulds CDC Board Member; and Juan Santana, Goulds CDC Staff.

District 10

Commissioner Javier D. Souto secures funds for outdoor emergency call boxes at county parks; dedicates Juan Amador Rodriguez Avenue

In an effort to protect families and children who use Miami-Dade County parks, Commissioner Javier D. Souto was able to secure \$350,000 of the 2002 fiscal budget to install a system of outdoor emergency telephones at all County metropolitan and district parks.

"The safety of residents and visitors using Miami-Dade County parks, beaches, and marinas is a top priority," said Commissioner Souto. "There is extreme concern on behalf of the residents of Miami-Dade County regarding safety in our parks and beaches in light of recent incidents at A.D. Barnes Park and South Beach, as well as the rash of child abductions throughout our nation."

Commissioner Souto recommends the call boxes be installed first at the largest parks including metropolitan and district facilities such as Crandon Park, Greynolds Park, Haulover Park, and Amelia Earhart Park.

The call box system is used in several cities throughout the nation including local college campuses such as Florida International University, Miami Dade Community College and the University of Miami. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has used emergency call boxes throughout its highway system for many years. Call boxes can be programmed to not only provide direct communication to a "911" dispatcher, but also to send a signal with the exact location of the emergency to Department personnel. Pedestal-mounted call boxes can be designed to be wheelchair-accessible and modifications can also be provided to assist hearing-impaired patrons.

"A small investment can go a long way in helping our residents and visitors feel safe," said Commissioner Souto. "One child who we can save from abduction or one woman who we save from a potential rape at one of our parks or beaches is worth this minimal investment, which we hope to have available at all our parks and public facilities in the near future."

Commissioner Souto joined community leaders and residents in dedicating SW 82 Avenue between SW 8 Street and Coral Way as Juan Amador Rodriguez Avenue. Rodriguez, a highly respected radio personality, passed away in June 2002. Thousands of listeners tuned in everyday to listen to Rodriguez on Radio Mambi. A former Cuban political leader and outstanding journalist on the island, Rodriguez's friends often referred to him as the "country bumpkin of Candelaria."



Commissioner Souto (center) joined community leaders and residents in dedicating SW 82 Avenue.

District 11

Commissioner Joe A. Martinez honors local schools' improvement on statewide test



Commissioner Joe A. Martinez speaks to children at Bowman Foster Ashe elementary school.

In the fall, Commissioner Joe A. Martinez honored several Miami-Dade County public schools for their improvement on the standardized Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). He presented proclamations to students, teachers and administrators at the following elementary schools within his district: Joe Hall; Bowman Foster Ashe; Dr. Gilbert L. Porter; Ethel Koger Beckham; Bent Tree; Claude Pepper; Christina M. Eve; Dante B. Fascell; Jack David Gordon; Greenglade; Zora Neale Hurston; Oliver Hoover; Kendale Lakes; Wesley Matthews; and Dr. Carlos J. Finlay. A few of the schools managed to boost their grade from a "C" to an "A."

"Recognizing our students is important for their growth and development," said Commissioner Martinez. "Teachers and school administrators also need to know that their efforts to improve education are appreciated."

Commissioner Martinez has acknowledged struggling public schools throughout his district for their improvement on the comprehensive FCAT exam since Gov. Jeb Bush introduced the statewide A+ Plan to Florida legislation in 1998.

District 12

Commissioner José "Pepe" Diaz leads effort to help Doral become a city

On Tuesday, November 19, 2002, Miami-Dade County Commissioner José "Pepe" Diaz, District 12, sponsored a resolution allowing residents of the Doral area the chance to decide whether to incorporate their growing community. The resolution, approved by the Board of County Commissioners, allows Doral residents the right to vote on this decision during a special election on Tuesday, January 28, 2003.

"Doral is a thriving community that has grown tremendously throughout the years, and we have former Commissioner José "Pepe" Cancio, among others, to thank for their diligent efforts in helping the residents incorporate," said Commissioner Diaz. "This is a worthwhile effort, a wise investment for the County, and residents deserve the opportunity to make decisions for their own community."

If approved by voters, the proposed city of Doral would contribute a portion of its tax revenues to Miami-Dade County once it has paid for other municipal services such as fire rescue, the public library system, solid waste collection and police patrol.

The boundaries of the proposed city are: to the north, Northwest 90 Street from 117 Avenue to 97 Avenue, and Northwest 58 Street from 97 Avenue to the Palmetto Expressway; the Dolphin Expressway on the South; the Palmetto Expressway on the east; and the Florida Turnpike on the west.

Commissioner Diaz's district office, located at 8345 NW 12 Street, is open weekdays from 9am to 5pm. The district's office phone is 305- 599-1200. His staff includes Domingo Moya, Chief of Staff; and commission aides Olga Fulgueira, Ima Molina, Mike Cantens, Guerlin Escar, Carolina Sivoli, Cristina Leon and Maria Leivano.



Commissioner José "Pepe" Diaz was officially sworn in as a member of the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners for District 3 on Tuesday, October 15, 2002. Pictured from left: daughters Monique, Cristal, Celine, and wife Maria Diaz.

District 13

Commissioner Natacha Seijas participates in bike trail re-opening at Amelia Earhart Park

Commissioner Natacha Seijas recently joined Miami-Dade Parks' Director Vivian Donnell Rodriguez and other Parks officials to help dedicate the newly reopened mountain bike trails at Amelia Earhart Park in Hialeah.



The newly renovated bike trail is open for business!

"I am very proud to see this park grow into a place that the community can enjoy and be proud of," said Commissioner Seijas. "This park has so much to offer, from a special events area to the Farm Village and Tom Sawyer's Play Island to lakeside picnicking, kayaking and water bicycle rentals, a new Skate Park and Bark Park, and now these beautiful mountain bike trails."

More than 50 park patrons on all-terrain bikes showed up to test-ride the refurbished trails and enjoy the free festivities. Special activities included a youth bike rodeo with giveaways for participants who completed a bike skills course. Bicycle safety information was also available and the Oleta State Park Bike Patrols were on loan for the event, offering their assistance to trail riders.

In Da House, an area mountain bike organization, has offered its time, talents and funding since July of this year to help revitalize the trails. Every day after work and on weekends, the crew met at the site to clear the overgrown paths along the five-mile trail.

"If all of our residents were as committed to making a difference in their community as this group, there's no telling what mountain we could move," said Commissioner Seijas.

GOOD *Programs*

Roosevelt Bradley appointed Transit director

By Michael De Cossio, Miami-Dade Transit



Roosevelt Bradley, Director of Miami-Dade Transportation Agency.

Roosevelt Bradley, recently appointed director of Miami-Dade Transit (MDT), is a highly qualified transportation administrator with over 25 years experience in the industry. His career in transit administration encompasses bus passenger transportation, heavy rail, light rail, and freight transportation systems. Mr. Bradley began his transit career with CSX Transportation. He joined MDT in 1985, first working with the Metromover system, then Metrorail, and subsequently with Metrobus.

As MDT Director, Mr. Bradley is responsible for the second largest department in Miami-Dade County government and the 16th largest public transit system in the nation. With 2,800 employees, he manages an operating budget of \$227 million and a capital budget of approximately \$104 million. Because voters approved Miami-Dade's recent transit initiative, MDT expects to eventually employ another 3,000 employees, operate 635 more buses, and add 88.9 miles of rail service.

Beyond notable successes in transit, Mr. Bradley maintains his commitment to the vision and direction of the industry through numerous professional and civic affiliations. He is a board member and was recently re-elected president of the 100-member Miami chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO).

Bert Bertagna chosen to lead Information Technology Department

By Susie Fernandez, Information Technology

Bert W. Bertagna was recently appointed Chief Technology Officer for Miami-Dade County overseeing the Information Technology (IT) Department, a diversified data processing and communications organization serving one of the largest metropolitan county governments in the nation. Bertagna is responsible for providing strategic direction for integration of new technologies into the County's IT infrastructure. Working with the Office of the CIO, e-Government, and other county departments he directs and manages technical, professional, and administrative staff to meet business needs and to streamline and improve County IT operations. The Information Technology Department has more than 330 employees with an annual budget of \$67 million.

Bertagna began his career in 1982 with consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble and completed multiple work assignments based in Cincinnati, Ohio and Memphis, Tennessee. Bertagna's responsibilities at P&G included management & deployment of voice and data networks for P&G's Global Headquarters, Research Centers, and Manufacturing Facilities. He relocated to South Florida in 1992 when he joined the International Global Air Express carrier DHL Worldwide Express. Prior to joining Miami-Dade County, he was Vice President of Information Services for the International Americas Region of DHL and was based in Plantation, Florida. In that role, he was leading IT strategy, critical initiatives, and service delivery for over 50 countries covering Canada, Mexico, Central & South America and the Caribbean. Bertagna graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1981 where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science.



Bert Bertagna, Chief Technology Officer



debut on Miami-Dade TV

It's already your source for all the latest county news, and now you can watch it in two languages. Miami-Dade Ahora, the Spanish-language edition of the award-winning Miami-Dade Now, has made its debut on Miami-Dade TV. Hosts Shirley Ravachi and Wilson Nunez tell you what's going on in Miami-Dade, as they highlight county services that can save you time and money.

Ravachi also produces the show along with Seth Kaplan, who produces Miami-Dade Now. Miami-Dade Ahora airs daily at 9am, 6:30pm and 11:30pm. Miami-Dade Now airs daily at noon, 9pm and 11pm.

Fire Department provides additional service at Miami International Airport

By Chief Manny Mena, Fire Rescue

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) implemented additional service at the north perimeter of Miami International Airport (MIA) on September 30, 2002. A newly constructed facility located at NW 36 Street and Red Road houses the department's airport administrative and training staff along with a traditional structural firefighting truck.



Firefighters participate in emergency drill at Miami International Airport.

This apparatus, known as a Tele-Squirt, has an elevated, extendable water supply. Designated as Squirt 59, this new unit serves the facilities on MIA's north perimeter, responding to aircraft service and maintenance operations, as well as cargo carriers and executive aviation fixed-base operators. It also augments the department's airfield units on aircraft emergencies and calls at the north areas of the passenger terminal.

As with the other airport stations, personnel and support come from MDRF. Staffing of Squirt 59 consists of four airport rescue firefighters (ARFF), two of them are certified hazardous materials (haz-mat) technicians. The unit provides for quick response and early mitigation on haz-mat alerts with a complete state-of-the-art monitoring and detection equipment combined with the highest level of specialized chemical, biological and radiological training available. The crew is prepared to respond to any level of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) disaster as part of the overall MDRF haz-mat response.

Miami-Dade TV Wins an Emmy

By Phares Poliard, Department of Communications

Miami-Dade TV's ACCESS program and the station's Executive Producer, Carol Higgins, received a regional Emmy Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Suncoast region on December 7, 2002. ACCESS was nominated in the Informational Program Category. This marks the first time a Miami-Dade TV program has won an Emmy Award.



The Suncoast Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences is a nonprofit organization dedicated to excellence in television in the entire State of Florida, most of the State of Louisiana, eastern Texas including Houston, San Antonio and other eastern Texas markets, as well as Mobile Alabama and Thomasville, Georgia. Programs produced by regional networks, local affiliates and production companies throughout this area compete for awards in 19 categories.

"ACCESS is a unique approach to government TV programming," noted Carol Higgins, MDTV Executive Producer. "It's a fast-paced, informative look at the services Miami-Dade government provides. We're committed to the idea that government programming doesn't have to be boring, and this recognition from our peers is confirmation that we're succeeding."



ACCESS producer Carol Higgins (center) discusses the next scene to be shot with host Salimah Jetha Karim, sound man Travis Gearhart and videographer Shawn Hinchey.

The recent Emmy Award is only one of the many awards the station has won for excellence in programming. Earlier this year, Miami-Dade TV was presented with three Telly Awards. The Telly Awards is a national competition honoring excellence in non-network television programs and commercials. Bronze Tellys were awarded to Miami-Dade Now, Downtown Dade and the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Nature Center program.

"I am extremely proud of the station's work product. This most recent award is a tribute to the staff's hard work and dedication," stated County Manager

Steve Shiver. "MDTV's programming is among the best government TV nationwide. I routinely encourage Miami-Dade residents and employees to tune in, as there are many informative, fun and educational programs aired throughout the day."

Miami-Dade TV is Miami-Dade County's government access cable TV station, televising county meetings and public information programming 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It appears on channel 34 on all cable systems in the county with these exceptions: AT&T Miami, Channel 31; AT&T West, Channel 14, AT&T Aventura, Channel 38; Moffat Cable, Channel 62. Access plays at 9:30pm on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sundays. For other times please check the county's web portal miamidade.gov.

e-Government

www.miami-dade.gov wins second place in national competition

By Loreta Cronk, e-Government

Miami-Dade County's web portal, www.miamidade.gov, recently ranked second place in *Best of the Web*, a national competition of local government websites. County Manager Steve Shiver, Chief Information Officer Randy Witt, and eGovernment Director Judi Zito were presented the award during the 7th Annual Best Of The Web Awards Dinner and Banquet in October, in New York City.

More than 350 entries were received for this year's competition and judged by representatives from the Center for Digital Government, Government Technology magazine, Public Technology, Inc. (PTI), State Technologies, Inc., and the 2001 Best of the Web Winners. Entries were evaluated for innovation, functionality, efficiency, participation and other important benchmarks.

"We are so proud of this honor and all the hard work that has gone into making our web portal so successful," said Shiver. "We have opened the virtual doors of County Hall 24-hours a day to a long list of online services and endless information useful to the residents we serve."

Some highlights of recent additions to the County's web portal include:

- e-Permitting - This first phase of a new web application allows contractors to submit applications for electrical, plumbing, mechanical and gas subsidiary and stand alone permits, pay the fees and print their permit card from their Internet browser. <http://www.miamidade.gov/bldg/>
- My Neighborhood - Enter an address or landmark and obtain information for a neighborhood on property sales and taxes, crime statistics, code violations, capital improvements and more.
- Vendor enrollment - Vendors interested in doing business with the county can now view business opportunities online. www.miamidade.gov/dpm

Tampa, Florida was awarded first place among local government entries. Miami-Dade's 2nd place finish was better than larger communities such as Indianapolis, Honolulu, and Dallas. This national distinction is yet another great showing and award for miamidade.gov.

"It's good news that the Best of the Web competition gets more and more difficult to judge with each passing year," said Cathilea Robinett, Executive Director of the Center for Digital Government. "We welcome the challenge and congratulate all the winners."

The County's website for children, kids.miamidade.gov, has also received widespread recognition, recently chosen as a finalist in two different international competitions. It was selected as one of 19 "eGovernment" category finalists of the 2002 Stockholm Challenge, and one of 14 finalists out of 433 entries is the 2002 Global Junior Challenge.

Miami-Dade assists Sunny Isles Beach launch its user friendly website

By Loreta Cronk, e-Government

Miami-Dade e-Government employees have been hard at work this past year on a collaborative inter-local agreement assisting the City of Sunny Isles Beach develop its new web portal. Scheduled for launch in January, the website will have a sophisticated, cosmopolitan look combined with a 'hometown' feel. Equally important, it will contain information that residents, visitors, business owners and city employees living and working in the city will look for most.



New Sunny Isles Beach government facility.

"It's obvious that the County's staff knew how to make a web portal easy to use," said Alyce Hanson, the city's administrative services director at a special presentation held at City Hall in October. "They also already knew the elements involved in making a website work on a variety of browsers, and had experience in making the website handicapped accessible."

Miami-Dade Geographic Information Systems

Beyond Mapquest

By Loreta Cronk, e-Government

One of the most popular features on the web today are digital mapping sites, where consumers can enter an address and instantly access location-specific maps showing driving routes, lodging, restaurants and other places of interest. Imagine using the same technology to obtain information like recent property sales, crime statistics, or beautification projects. Miami-Dade County government just launched two new interactive web services, called *My Home* and *My Neighborhood* that do just that.

Part of the County's larger web portal, <http://www.miamidade.gov>, these new online services use Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to access information from several County databases, customizing the output for a specific address or neighborhood.

My Home provides property appraisal and property tax information to county residents based on the owner's name, address or folio number. Enter your address, and you can find out your property's assessed value, the square footage of your home, the year it was built and the sales amount. Through the same online service, information from the County Tax Collector's Office will let you know if your taxes have been paid, how much they are, and if prior taxes are due. If you are enrolled in the quarterly payment plan, you can even track your installment payments online.



Booths were set up allowing the public to see how Miami-Dade incorporates GIS technology in its services.

The accompanying online service, *My Neighborhood*, provides mapping and information for crime incidents, code violations, capital improvements, land use and sales information. "The ways in which individuals, businesses and neighborhoods can use this service are endless," says Mary Fuentes, Director of the e-Services Division for the County. Looking to purchase a home in a particular neighborhood? This service can show you what neighboring properties sold for within the past three years. Part of a neighborhood citizen's crime watch group? Enter an address


or street intersection and the application automatically creates a map of all reported auto thefts, burglaries and robberies that have occurred within the vicinity for the year 2002. An accompanying report lists the individual incidents by day of week and time of day. "This is a valuable communication tool that neighborhood watch groups can use to assist their crime prevention strategies" says Major James DiBernardo, head of Community Affairs for the Miami-Dade Police Department. "We are very excited with the way this application leverages the County's technology to enhance public safety."

Unlike property-related data available through these tools, crime incidents are reported only for the unincorporated area of the County -- although perhaps not for long. "The crime mapping feature has already received rave reviews from many of the local municipalities," says Mary. "We've begun working with the City of North Miami to incorporate their crime data, and other cities have expressed an interest as well."

And that's not all. The same application maps code violations such as graffiti and overgrown vacant lots, as well as capital improvement projects, such as street improvements and drainage efforts.

The *My Home* and *My Neighborhood* online tools are made possible through the robust capabilities of the County's GIS network. Miami-Dade County began compiling "layers" of land or geo-based information back in the late 80's, but much of it was limited to internal use. Then, two years ago, the County's Property Appraiser introduced an online service that allowed residents to view property appraisal information. The success associated with that project encouraged Mary and her e-Services group to take it to the next level, integrating different databases and GIS layers under a common look and feel. County Manager Steve Shiver concurs. "This is an innovative and unique opportunity to take a valuable base of information that was developed for our own organization, and place it into the hands of our public. It represents yet another successful initiative that uses technology to transform the way in which we deliver county services."

Be sure and check out *My Home* at <http://gisims2.co.miami-dade.fl.us/MyHome> and *My Neighborhood* at <http://gisims2.co.miami-dade.fl.us/MyNeighborhood> "And visit often!" states Mary. "This is just the beginning of our effort to put an increasing amount of GIS information online, so visitors to the site should continue to check back for new additions."

miamidade.gov 

GOOD *Community*

The Guardian Ad Litem program speaks up for children

By Victoria Arias, Miami-Dade Courts

Imagine not being able to express yourself verbally. For children facing dependency issues in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida's Juvenile Court they are no longer silent. The Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) program helps the "voiceless" by providing these children a platform to share their stories.

By capturing a picture of a child's life and by retelling their stories to a judge, GAL offers the opportunity for the court to get to know the child. This information helps the court facilitate the proper programs that will best serve the needs of the child. The Guardian Ad Litem program was created in 1980 after the Florida Legislature required that a Guardian Ad Litem be appointed in every case of child abuse and neglect. Since that time thousands of "voiceless" children have been able to share their stories. The GAL program is responsible for recruiting, training and supervising volunteers who represent the "best interest of a child" in all juvenile dependency and criminal court proceedings.

Volunteers – a crucial component

"No one does more for the kids than the volunteers," boasts Joni Goodman, Director of GAL. It is the role of the volunteer that is a crucial component in helping to safeguard the health and well being of a child and advocate for the necessary services to help the child. GAL volunteers gather information about what is going on in the life of a child by regularly visiting the child and by conducting interviews with people associated with the child. The volunteers attend hearings on the child's behalf and make recommendations to the judge. For volunteer opportunities and more information about the Guardian Ad Litem program, contact 305-638-6861.

Hurricane storm scale's creator honored with building dedication

By Miriam Rossi, Building Department

Internationally acclaimed structural engineer, Herbert S. Saffir, best known for the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, was honored at a dedication ceremony by having a state-of-the-art Miami-Dade County government office building renamed for him. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale is utilized worldwide by weather forecasters, governments, rescue organizations, emergency management entities and the general public to measure the damage potential of hurricanes and assigns a category of one to five.

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Joe A. Martinez, District 11, and other distinguished guests dedicated the Miami-Dade County Herbert S. Saffir Permitting and Inspection Center located at 11805 SW 26 Street (Coral Way) on Wednesday, October 23, 2002. The facility is a one-stop shop of permitting services and houses several County departments involved in the permitting process to include the Building Department and segments of the Department of Environmental Resources Management, Fire, Planning and Zoning, Public Works, and Water & Sewer departments.

"This is one of the greatest honors I've ever received," said Saffir, a resident of Coral Gables since 1947. At age 85, he continues to work at his engineering consultant office in Coral Gables, helping communities and nations as close as the Bahamas and as distant as Australia to conduct long-range planning to protect their buildings from hurricane winds.

He is recognized nationally and internationally for his contributions to the design of hurricane-resistant buildings and structures as well as helping to strengthen building codes and construction standards for at-risk areas. He served on the post-Hurricane Andrew Building Code Evaluation Task Force and continues to be published worldwide for his writings on hurricane resistant design.

The pioneering work and monumental achievements of Mr. Saffir have resulted in better building codes, more resistant structures and a common language used by residents, businesses and government officials to describe and understand hurricanes.

For more information, please contact Miriam Rossi or Nora Palou, Communications and Public Information Section, Miami-Dade County Building Department at 786-315-2295.



Miami-Dade County Herbert S. Saffir Permitting and Inspection Center.

Terrorist attack foiled at at Miami Jai-Alai

The plot thickens at a recent drill



Miami-Dade Fire & Rescue personnel take a decontamination shower at the conclusion of the drill.

By Roslyn Viterbo, Office of Emergency Management

The scenario: A terrorist cell planning to release a lethal chemical agent at a Miami sporting event had their plans foiled when the device they used prematurely discharged. The Miami Jai-Alai Fronton, targeted by the terrorist, had not yet opened, so fortunately the number of people on the premises was minimal. Approximately 15 victims, including the two terrorists, confronted the first fire rescue personnel responding to the call.

The scene that unfolded next proved critical for the residents of Miami-Dade County. This first fire rescue unit to respond quickly assessed the potential danger and recognized the indicators of a terrorist attack. They immediately put into action the components of the terrorism dispatch protocol. The drill was underway.

On October 1, 2002, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinated what they termed a small-scale terrorism drill. By all accounts small-scale seems to misrepresent the event considering the number of man-hours and resources that it took to bring it to fruition. Six fire departments (City of Miami, Coral Gables, Hialeah, Key Biscayne, Miami Beach, and Miami-Dade County) participated, as did the City of Miami Police Department and the Miami-Dade's OEM. The American Red Cross supplied volunteers who, portraying victims, helped authenticate the scene.

Choreographed specifically to deal with chemical Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), the drill culminated months of WMD training as well as training on the OEM's mass decontamination trailer. Miami-Dade County's Board of County Commissioners allocated the funds (\$500,000) for this anti-terrorism training, which the OEM disbursed among the six (6) participating fire departments.

The drill demonstrated Miami-Dade County's ability to operate under a multijurisdictional, unified command and conduct mass decontamination. It further demonstrated that Miami-Dade County's fire departments are taking a pro-active approach in the protection of their residents and are prepared to function as one when the situation warrants. The drill was a measurable success by any standards.

Affordable housing community rises from former development

By Javier Morejon, Housing Agency

Once it was known as Larchmont Gardens, a 352-unit public housing development that was in need of repairs. Today it has been transformed into the Sunset Palm Villas development, which consists of 266 affordable townhomes with prices starting at \$32,500.

The property was completely remodeled with new kitchens, bathrooms, air conditioners and washer-dryers installed. In addition, the developers have made it into a gated community with an educational center, playground, and recreational area planned to open by early next spring. Homes range from single-story, one-bedroom, one-bathroom units to two-story, four-bedroom, three-bathroom units. The first units were available for purchase four months after the groundbreaking in June 2000.

The buildings were erected in 1959 and were acquired by MDHA in 1962. The property required extensive renovation which exceeded agency resources. "I'm pleased to see so many opportunities opening up for families living in this area," said MDHA Director Rene Rodriguez. "When this property was sold, it was done so with the stipulation that affordable housing be built, and I'm glad to see such beautiful homes become available at a price residents can afford."

The result has been a successful development in North Miami-Dade. "The response has been incredibly positive," said Lissette Calderon, manager of Sunset Palm Villas for Little River Development Ltd., the owner of the site. "The families are very excited to be moving in and we are excited to be able to provide quality affordable housing for these families. It's a win-win situation for everyone." Approximately 170 families have moved into their new homes and 100 more are expected to move in over the next few months as new units become available. For additional information, please contact 305-754-5251.



Sunset Palm Villas was recently renovated to provide affordable housing.

GOOD *Community*

Library System to open branch in Sunny Isles Beach and continues construction of Miami Beach Regional

By William Urbizu, Miami-Dade Public Library System

Miami-Dade County and the Miami-Dade Public Library System have signed an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Sunny Isles Beach to operate a 7500 square foot library on the ground floor of the city's new city hall. As part of the agreement, the city will provide total funding for the construction of the facility and lease it to the Library System for a twenty-year period at \$1 annually. The Library System will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the library, in addition to providing staffing, furnishings and materials. Groundbreaking ceremonies recently took place for the new government center to be located at 18050 Collins Avenue. The state-of-the-art facility, designed by the architectural firm of Spillis Candela, is a four-story building with 57,000 square feet of office space that will house all operating city departments, as well as the new public library. The city hall complex is expected to open in the fall of 2004.



(L-R) Raymond Santiago, Library Director; Senator Gwen Margolis; William Urbizu, Assistant Director of Marketing, Media Relations and Support Services; with elected officials of Sunny Isles Beach; Vice Mayor Danny Iglesias, Mayor David Samson, Commissioners Norman S. Edelcup and Gerry Goodman.

Construction of new Miami Beach regional library underway

A new, 42,000 square foot, 2-story regional library on Miami Beach is finally off the drawing board and into actual construction. The library is being constructed by The Tower Group, which is also building the new Parrot Jungle facility on Mac Arthur Causeway. The library, designed by noted architect Robert A.M. Stern, will be the third building in what is being called "the Collins Park Cultural Center". The Miami Beach Regional Library, the Bass Museum and the Miami City Ballet buildings border Collins Park at Collins Avenue between 21 Street and 22 Street. Stern will also redesign the park when the current library is razed. The new park will be landscaped and have a sculpture garden.



The new 7500 square foot Sunny Isles Beach Library will be part of the city's new city hall.

for exterior façades that are primarily stucco, simulating the coral stone façade of the Bass Museum. Large metal-framed windows will punctuate the design which is adorned with terra cotta ornaments below the windows and roof. The library will have an impressive beacon-like tower over the entry lobby. Additionally, it will have an auditorium, an open garden and an inside café with seating.

Current plans are for the building to be turned over to the Library System for occupancy in the fall, 2003. The library will open later in the year with an additional \$2 million worth of books and other library materials.

New One-Stop Career Center opens in North Dade

By Marie Bertot, South Florida Workforce



The South Florida Workforce (SFW) Northside One-Stop Career Center held its Grand Opening in November with international, national, state and local labor officials participating. The festivities began with tours followed by a short program that included a South Florida National Guard Color Guard ceremony, a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem and a ribbon-cutting.

The new center, located at 7900 NW 27 Avenue, Suite 200, is operated by Jobs for Miami. It serves Miami-Dade county residents of greatest need in terms of unemployment compensation claims and people transitioning from welfare to work.

"A tremendous amount of planning went into opening this facility in order to provide customers with the best possible service under one roof," said SFW Executive Director Harriet Spivak.

The Northside One-Stop Career Center links businesses with skilled workers and provides individuals with the resources necessary to succeed in their careers. Within the center's 20,000 square feet, is a children's play area, wardrobe boutique managed by Suited for Success, electronic classroom, state-of-the-art boardroom, resource area and several private offices for counseling. For additional information, and to find out your closest location, call 1-877-872-JOBS.

Metrobus riders enjoy written words and visual arts during their daily commute

By Manny Palmeiro, Miami-Dade Transit Agency

During their daily commute, Metrobus passengers can now enjoy poetry and visual arts aboard hundreds of Miami-Dade Transit's buses. Lip, Tongue & Ear Poetry Productions (LTE), The New World School of the Arts (NWSA), Miami-Dade Transit and Miami-Dade Art in Public Places begin a new program, the heART Miami: art & poetry in public transportation, designed to provide eye-catching posters for public transportation.

Fifteen designs, created during the course of a unique collaboration between art students and poets, were installed on buses incorporating artful words and visual imagery that celebrate our community, promote pride, and support literacy. Through this program, poetic words and images will uplift bus passengers on their way to work and when they return back home. Miami-Dade Transit is the second



largest public transportation system in the southeastern U.S. and carries over half of all the transit trips in Florida.

Posters such as these, incorporate artful words and visual imagery on Metrobuses.

A Tropical Mardi Gras at The Fair

By Nancy Cooper, Miami-Dade Fair and Exposition

Save the date, no save the month of March 2003 for “A Tropical Mardi Gras at The Fair,” and plan on having the time of your life. This year, the 53-year old Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition, on SW Coral Way and 112 Avenue, puts a brand new tropical twist on great fair traditions.

Bring the family and your friends too, because there will be something for everyone at The Fair. Participants will be able to enjoy a variety of entertainment from an old fashioned circus to a spectacular ice show, from live calypso music to wild animals. Learn more about South Florida’s agricultural community and watch your children, and maybe even your grandchildren win prizes for school projects. Enjoy thrilling rides and watch the little ones giggle through kiddy rides. Catch a show and do not forget the food and games! Over 300 food vendors will serve up great fair food. All that fun, all that entertainment in one place – it is just too good to miss.

Last March, The Fair introduced a daily Mardi Gras parade and it was a huge hit with fairgoers. Chances are you will catch a strand of free beads and a glimpse of local radio and television personalities. This year, Mardi Gras takes on a tropical flavor with live music from throughout the Caribbean and Latin America and lots of free beads, local celebrities and more. The parade will happen every day at 6:30pm.

The traditional Big Top is back with a whole new show. The family-operated Royal Hanneford Circus has delighted audiences at The Fair for many years. This small, intimate circus takes you back to a kinder and gentler time when family entertainment was good, old fashion fun.



Thrilling rides at The Fair will allow everyone to have a great time.

There will be something for everyone in the family from a cool tropical ice show to an exciting open-air high dive show and lots of special events just for the little ones. All entertainment venues at The Fair are free with the price of general admission. Upon entering, everyone will get a free strand of Mardi Gras beads at the admission gate.

Fun, food, rides, games, entertainment and watching kids win their first prize at the county fair – are all part of the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition experience. Save the date, in fact save the whole month of March and discover A Tropical Mardi Gras at The Fair, March 13-30, 2003.

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